

THE ROMULUS ROMAN

119, No. 22

News you can use, news you can trust

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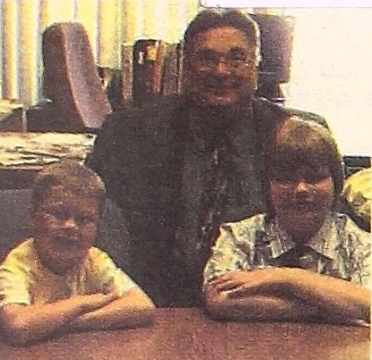
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Students shadow
principal for a day

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Pirates are lost
'At World's End'



Saturday is time
to help 'Rescue Rouge'

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City to revise tax break plan

Molly Tippen
Staff Writer

Economic Developer Tim Keyes thinks Romulus may be missing some opportunities to attract smaller businesses.

He thinks the city policy for tax abatements, which give industrial businesses a 50 percent tax break on the cost of improvements for up to 12 years, is geared to benefit big businesses, as opposed to the smaller, new ones that the city covets.

"The business landscape has changed so much since 2000, when the focus was retention," he said at a study session Tuesday night. "We have several small manufacturers that have expressed interest in coming to Romulus, but they fall into the four to six year abatement according to the city's formula.

"We need to think about making some changes to remain competitive," he added.

Tax abatements were created several years ago to assist industrial businesses with efforts to expand and grow amid intense foreign competition. Under law, the company can ask for a 50 percent reduction on taxes that would be paid on the cost of the improvements. Romulus has a consistent points formula based on the amount of the improvements, the length of time the company has been in the city and the number of jobs retained or created, among other factors.

The process has been a good one for businesses that are in town, but have not done much to lure new, small business, Keyes said.

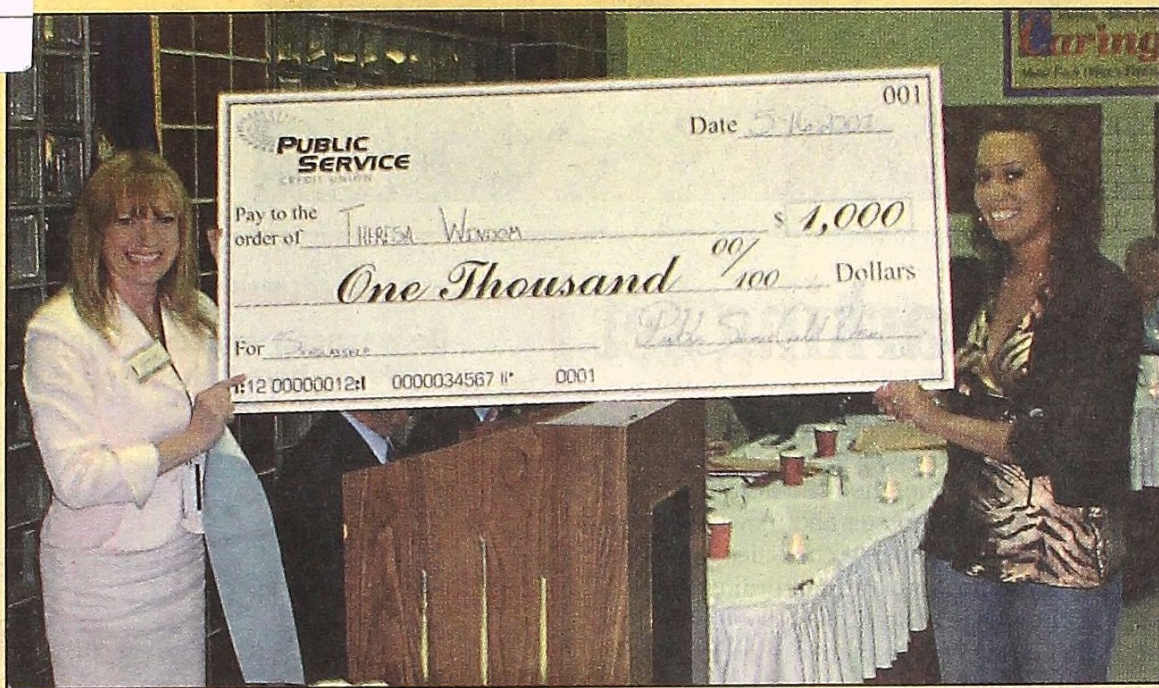
"I think we need to look at this as soon as possible," he said.

Councilman William Wadsworth said he would consider revising the abatement policy, if it were to benefit the city.

"I'd like to look at this, but we have to avoid giving away the store," he said. "We need to make sure we protect our interest so we don't get stung in the end."

Tax breaks for companies – at a time when residents are getting little or no tax relief – can be a dicey proposition for municipalities. Typically, residents soften if a project will bring badly needed

See Taxes, page 3



Amy McGraw, the marketing director of the Public Service Credit Union in Romulus, holds a big check with Theresa Windom, one of the awardees.

Credit union awards 14 scholarships

Renee White
Staff Writer

The Public Service Credit Union in Romulus took serving the public to another level recently when they presented 14 scholarships, each worth \$1,000.

Traditionally, the credit union awarded two \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors who planned to further their education. This year, the decision was made to extend the scholarship program to make it available to a wider and more diverse group of people.

The scholarship was not only increased from two to 14, but it was also made available to everyone furthering their education – not only high school seniors. The scholarship was

open to high school seniors and adults attending a vocational school, college or university.

Amy McGraw, marketing director of Public Service Credit Union, said that the scholarship is "just another example of how Public Service Credit Union is dedicated to serving the public."

"We know how much our members value higher education," she said. "With the cost of higher education, we want to do anything we can to help our members."

To apply, applicants had to be a member of the credit union and submit an essay about their college plans and why they thought they deserved the scholarship. A recommendation, school transcripts, extracurricular activities and volunteer ser-

vice were also taken into consideration. Applicants were required to have a grade point average above 2.5.

The credit union has a membership of around 20,000, but last year, only seven or eight people applied for the scholarships. This year, the credit union received 51 applications, a number McGraw called "phenomenal."

The 14 winners are from throughout the metro-Detroit area, and two of them are from Romulus.

Theresa Windom was the winner of the Dedicated Romulus High School Scholarship. She plans to attend the University of Detroit Mercy in the fall and pursue nursing

See Scholarships, page 3

Murder trial date set for Aug. 27

Molly Tippen
Staff Writer

A Wayne County Circuit Court judge scheduled a trial date for two men accused of fatally shooting a 21-year-old Belleville resident in Romulus on March 22.

Brandon Burkett, 18, of Taylor, and Jamal Sam, 17, of

Romulus, will face trial on first-degree murder charges along with Anthony Harris, 17, of Romulus, on Aug. 27, at the Frank Murphy Hall of Justice in Detroit.

Harris is charged with a felony court of accessory after the fact to murder for allegedly hiding the weapon.

The case will be heard in the courtroom of Judge James Callahan.

Burkett and Sam are charged for their alleged role in the death of Aaron McAdoo, a graduate of Romulus High School who had recently moved to Belleville.

See Death, page 3

New bill would standardize emergency services

Molly Tippen
Staff Writer

The state Senate voted this week to approve Senate Bill 410 and 411, which aims to standardize 911 services throughout the state.

The bills, which are co-sponsored by Sen. Ray Basham (D-Taylor) and Sen. Cameron S. Brown (R-Fawn River Township), will ensure stable, long-term funding for state and county 911 services, updating the outdated law that was created long before the

advent of cellular phones and Voice over Internet Protocol.

"Whether dialed from a landline, a cell phone or even a computer, these three numbers can mean the difference between life

See 911, page 3



Principal for a day

Three lucky students from Savage Elementary in Belleville got the chance recently to know what it's really like to be a principal. First grader Mitchell Urtel and third graders Jordan Urtel and Levi Sacco followed principal Nick Maniaci around to help make the big decisions for the day. Mitchell and Jordan Urtel received the opportunity when their parents placed the winning bid on the 'Principal for a Day' package at the second annual Savage Elementary Auction. Levi Sacco qualified when he brought in the most 'Boxtops for Education' during the year-end competition at Savage Elementary. Part of the prize was a visit to the Van Buren Public Schools administration building. Superintendent of Schools (Pictured left to right) are Linda Olson of the school district, Mitchell Urtel, Lazaroff, Levi Sacco, Maniaci and Jordan Urtel.

Public hearing on parking set

Andrea King
Staff Writer

A public hearing has been set to discuss parking along Main Street in Belleville.

The hearing will take place at 7:30 p.m. on June 4 to consider a two-hour parking time limit from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Monday through Friday) on Main Street between High Street and Denton/Liberty streets.

According to council members, the change could help clear up concerns from downtown business owners.

"The Downtown Development Authority discussed the parking issues at their last meeting and concluded that there does seem to be a need to limit parking on the north side of Main Street to only two hours," said City Manager Walter Mears.

"They also requested that the city council move forward with a plan to limit the parking to the same, then the administration will review the issue and move provide a recommendation to both bodies within the first few months of the new ordinance."

Belleville Police Chief Gene Taylor said he doesn't believe there are parking problems in that area.

"I don't think a two-hour parking limit will resolve anything," he said. "Every time we issue a ticket for these types of violations, people think it doesn't apply to them. I don't see this time-limit being justified."

"If you go down to that area during the daytime, there's parking spaces," he added.

The public hearing will take place prior to the June 4 regular city council meeting.

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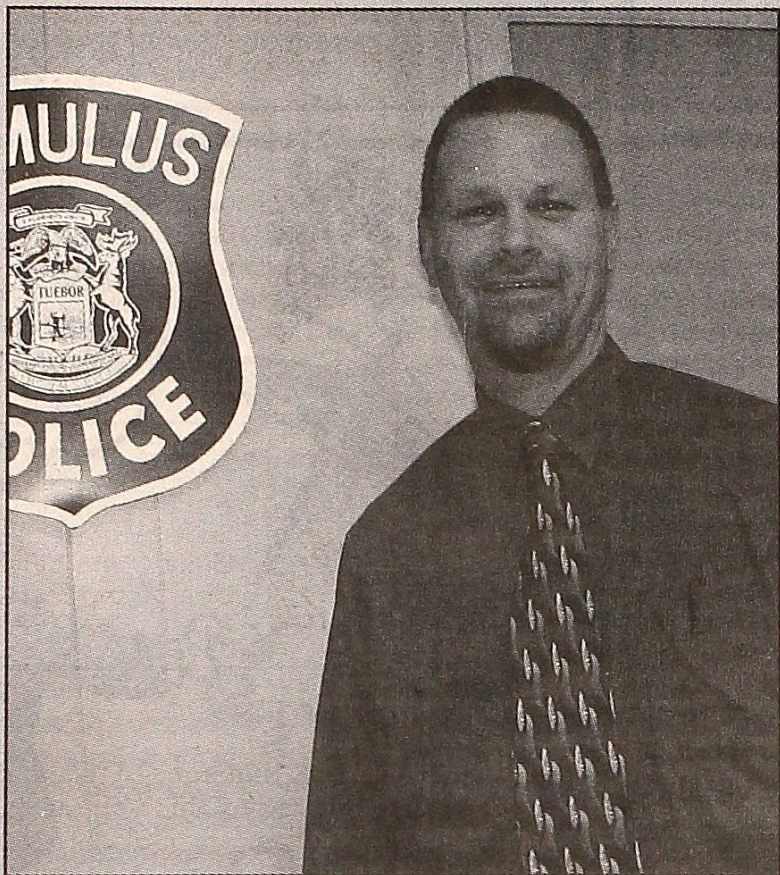
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Sergeant recalls career highlights

Molly Tippen
Staff Writer



Det. Sgt. Jeff Lazarski is retiring from the Romulus Police Department after 21 years of service today.

It's June 6, 1986, and Jeff Lazarski is getting ready to start his first job as a sworn police officer.

He figures he'll spend a few years with the Romulus Police Department, and then move on to a bigger city, where there's more action.

Within days of picking up his new badge, Lazarski discovered something he didn't expect. He realized he loved the city.

"It was almost instantaneous," he said. "I knew from that point on that I would spend my career here."

Today, Lazarski - now 46 years old - is busy packing up his things and calling it career in Romulus. He's retiring to accept a position with an insurer, where he will conduct fraud investigations.

"It's not going to be the same, but it's time to move on, said Lazarski, a father of three who supervises two detectives as a detective sergeant. "It made financial sense to me to retire now, and my wife figured we'd been lucky for 20 years. I've never been hurt on the job."

Lazarski, a former military police officer with the United States Army stationed in Germany and at several posts in the United States, said he always wanted to be a police officer.

"I grew up knowing that I wanted to go to school to be a police officer, I just needed to find a way to do that," he said. "I used the money from the military to go to school."

Romulus hired Lazarski after he graduated from the Detroit Police Academy. He felt at home almost immediately.

"It's just a good group of people," he said. "I learned from the moment I got here. I can't imagine working anywhere else. I know it's the right thing to retire, but a piece of

me will always be here. My heart is in police work."

Lazarski's experiences in Romulus prepared him well for fraud investigation, which was his specialty at one time. Identity theft is the fastest growing crime, and he expects to be very busy.

"
I grew up knowing that I wanted to go to school to be a police officer, I just needed to find a way to do that.

Det. Jeff Lazarski

He also knows that, given the appeals process in some of the cases he's worked, his career is unlikely to end anytime soon. Lazarski is likely to be called into court for at least five years after he officially leaves.

"I'm OK with it," he said. "Whenever I'm needed, I'll be here. I know it won't be over for a while."

In addition to working as a supervisor in the detective bureau, Lazarski was a schools resources officer - an experience that provided him with some great opportunities.

"Some of my best memories are of working in the schools," he said.

Children were involved in his best, and worst, experi-

ences in police work.

Lazarski delivered a baby, with whom he's still in contact today.

"I remember going into the house, and a woman is telling me that she thinks she's in labor, but her water hasn't broken," he said. "I peeled back the covers, and the baby was about half out. Three years later, to the day, I became a father for the first time."

Another child died in his arms, the victim of a choking.

"I did everything I could to help him," he said. "He was in an eating contest with a friend at school, and a hot dog was lodged down there. The medical examiner even told me there was nothing I could do. It was still hard, though."

Lazarski had praise for the city and the department leadership.

"Mayor (Alan) Lambert has been supportive, and so has Chief Charles Kirby and Deputy Chief Michael Coffey," he said.

Lazarski's co-workers have organized a going away party for him, but he senses it's not really good-bye.

"It's hard to imagine that there's been so much to do over the past week, and when I'm at home next week, it's going to be me and the TV," he said. "But it's a young man's job."

"As I leave, I know I did everything I could, and my career was everything I expected and more," he said. "I have no regrets."

groups of young men. McAdoo arrived after the fight and had no idea of what happened before shots were fired from the partially opened window of a dark-colored Dodge Charger that evening, according to police.

In a written confession given by Sam, he admitted to firing the shots, but said he was afraid of Burkett, who was involved in the fight, according to testimony given by detectives at a May 2 preliminary examination in front of Judge David Parrott of

the 34th District Court in Romulus.

Burkett and Sam are currently awaiting their next court date at the Wayne County Jail. There is no bond for those charged with first-degree murder in Michigan, according to state law.

If convicted of the charges, they will be sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Harris is facing four years behind bars if he is convicted of the accessory charge.

Taxes

FROM PAGE 1

jobs. Keyes said most of the job growth will be in small businesses.

"We can offer a lot to businesses in the \$5 to \$10 million range, but we don't have much for a business in the \$1.5 to \$5 million range," he said.

Municipalities are facing more savvy businesses and developers who are asking for more and more when they consider locating a business in a tough statewide economy, Keyes said.

"They're shopping around places like Canton, Taylor, Trenton - they're trying to get the most for their buck," he said.

Romulus isn't the only municipality seeking to revise their stance on abatements. Canton Township is considering making all abatements for the full 12 years allowed by the state to make their community more attractive.

Mayor Pro-tem Randy Gear said he wondered if the state economy is so bad that they'll have to take something for nothing.

"Are we going to have to do this to prevent going extinct, or are we just going to have to give away the store?" he asked.

Three council members will meet with Keyes and Mayor Alan Lambert to discuss the policy, and then take a plan to the council for approval.

Scholarships

FROM PAGE 1

and anesthesiology.

McGraw said that Windom was chosen to receive the scholarship partly because of her essay, which she wrote about wanting to go into nursing because her mother is a nurse.

Windom, who is involved in the Health Occupation Students of America and the National Honor Society, was happy to receive the scholarship.

"It feels great because it's less of a burden for my mom, financially," Windom said.

The other Romulus winner, Samina Haq, is a two-time winner. In addition to her \$1,000 scholarship this year, she won the Dedicated Romulus High School Scholarship when she graduated last year.

The scholarship committee didn't know it was her when they chose her for the award, according to McGraw. The committee didn't know anyone's names when they were going through the appli-

cations.

Haq, who currently attends University of Michigan-Dearborn, was "very excited" to receive a scholarship from the credit union for a second year.

"I couldn't believe it," Haq said.

She is currently undecided on her major, but is leaning toward biology. She is involved in many activities on campus, including the Pakistani Students Association, the Muslim Students Association and the Student Activities Board.

Haq also spends a lot of her free time volunteering in the community. She recently completed a walk for mental illness and said that she volunteers wherever is needed.

Her tremendous amount of volunteering and her high grade point average were two of the reasons she was awarded the scholarship, according to McGraw.

Windom received her scholarship at the Romulus High School Honors Banquet on May 16. Haq and the other 12 recipients were honored during a ceremony.

911

FROM PAGE 1

and death for people," Brown said. "These bills will make sure that 911 is more equally funded and that all technologies that access 911 are supporting this important service."

Basham became involved with the 911 issue after he attempted to call for help when he saw a vehicle on fire, and the operator told him he didn't know where he was and hung up on him. One of the local TV news stations did a 20-second piece on it, and the spokesman for the Detroit Police Department said Basham can't expect special treatment.

"I didn't tell them who I was, and the reporter got off the subject," Basham said.

"The reason we need the bill is that Michigan takes a quilt approach to 911 services, and we need a blanket approach."

Basham visited six 911 centers and noticed wide variances of what was considered an emergency. The bills, he said, would establish statewide operating standards and mandatory training for emergency operators.

"In calling 9-1-1 in an emergency, the operators answering the phones should be as well-

trained and reliable as the emergency workers who respond to the call," said Basham.

The bill also addresses funding issues that have cropped up with cell phones and voice service, which generally pay less for 911 services than landline users. The vast majority of 911 funding is provided by landline telephone users in the form of a surcharge on their monthly phone bill, but as more consumers choose cellular telephones or voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) for their communications needs, 911 funding has fallen drastically.

"What people will notice is that the bill is revenue-neutral, it's really a shifting of funding," he said. "Cell phone and VoIP users will see their bills go up slightly, and landline users will see theirs go down," he said.

The bills are based on recommendations by the Emergency Telephone Service Committee (ETSC). The ETSC estimates that most consumers will end up seeing no change - or even a drop - in the total amount they are charged. The bipartisan package of bills will have to be approved by the state House to be enacted into law.

Basham said he has requested a hearing in the House on the matter.

Death

FROM PAGE 1

The incident that gave rise to the charges against the three men unfolded on March 26, 2007, shortly after McAdoo met friends at the Sky Harbor Apartments on Eureka Road and Brandt Avenue to play basketball with some friends.

The problems started after a fight occurred between two

OPINION

Friends like these are important, indeed

Saturday morning, everyone will have a chance to do something positive to help the environment.

Dozens of municipalities throughout western Wayne County will host Rouge Rescue Day, a time when volunteers can come out and do their part to help spruce up this important waterway.

The activities are as varied as the communities that host them—from planting native shrubs and wildflowers along Tonquish Creek in Plymouth Township Park to removing invasive species along the Johnson Creek in Northville Township and along Washington Trail Park in Wayne.

These activities all have one thing in common, though, they'll help restore the Rouge River and that will help with the environmental picture, overall.

The Friends of the Rouge River (FOTR) have been organizing the Rouge River Rescue since 1986. Since then, thousands of volunteers have taken the first Saturday in June to clean up or otherwise improve the watershed. They've made plenty of progress, too. In the decades since this valuable program began, life has returned to portions of the river that had become too polluted to support it. The water itself has a more healthy sheen to it. The woodlands around it appear healthier, too—save for the hundreds of dead and dying ash trees.

In most Rouge River Rescue locations, the hard work is complemented with fun activities designed to increase our awareness about the river and its importance to the local ecosystem. There are bug hunts, fishing derbies, interactive displays with live animals and more. And yes, there will be t-shirts given out to those who take part in the volunteer effort.

The best part about this worthwhile activity, though, is not the food served or the new shirts we'll take home. It's the camaraderie we feel when we're doing something important for no other reason than that it needs to be done.

The FOTR is an organized group, but we should all in some way be a friend of the river. We should take steps not to overly impact it—cut down on the fertilizer we use, or use types not laden with phosphates. We should wash our cars at commercial washes, not in our own driveways, where the chemicals filter down into storm sewers. And we should take our time to pitch in at events like Rouge Rescue Day.

The river needs all the friends it can get.

Last minute, temporary fix

Lo and behold, members of the state House and Senate agreed to a compromise on Friday that 'solved' the state budget crisis—at least for a few months.

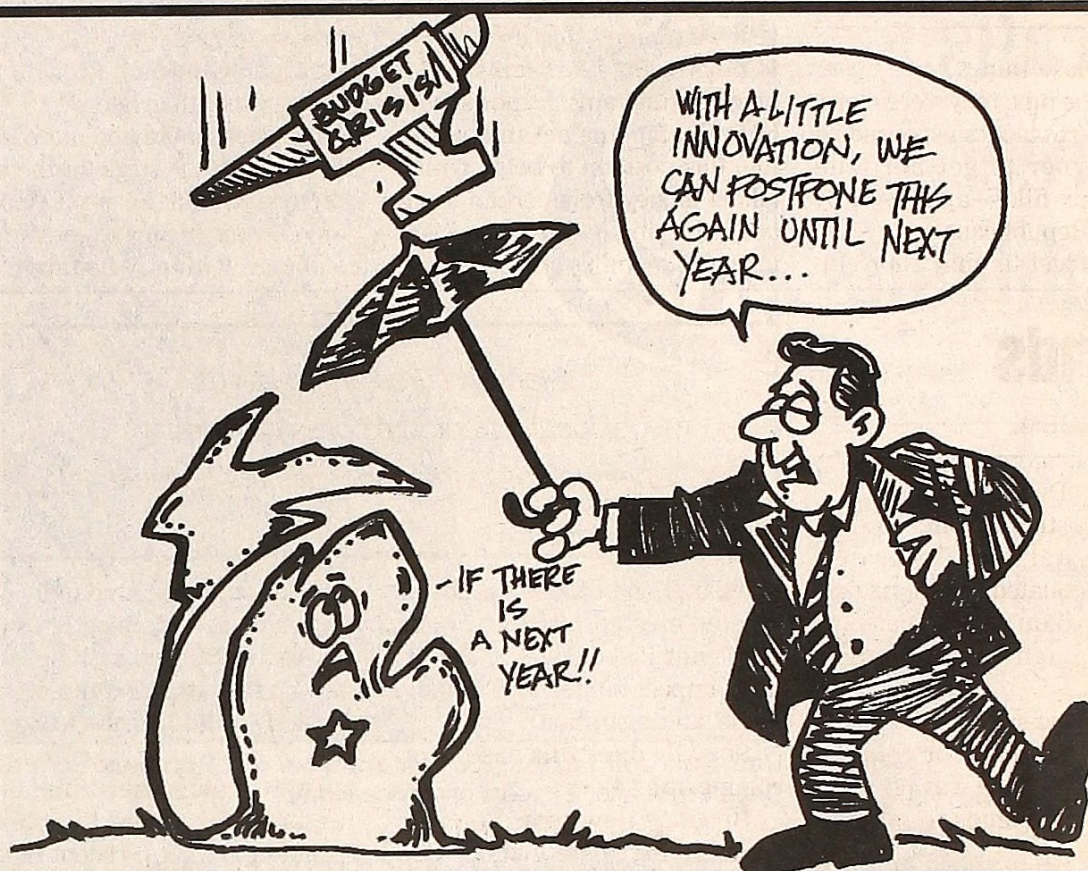
Maybe the only thing our leaders in Lansing needed to tackle this overwhelming problem was the prospect of working through a holiday weekend.

We hope they didn't take too much time to relax, though, after this seemingly improbable victory—which was probably all for show, anyway.

It's a short-term fix, the proverbial budget Band-Aid, and it didn't tackle any of the serious issues facing our state. In some ways, it was a step backward.

The good news is that local school administrators dodged the per-pupil funding cut bullet once again. The state will avoid a long-term closure that was threatened earlier this year, too. In all likelihood,

See **Budget**, page 5



Lesson in leisure living

Sometimes you just have to cast aside your personal preferences and go with the flow.

With that in mind, I put the last of the bags in the trunk and prepared for a long drive up north to a cottage owned by my wife's grandmother.

I'm not fond of traveling on holiday weekends; I get irritated with normal traffic flows, let alone highways clogged with people seeking a temporary escape from their everyday lives. Gas prices, too, had forced another compromise—this was the first time that there was no reason for me to drive separately up to the cabin. Usually my job dictated that I had to leave later or return earlier than everyone else. Not this time.

The drive itself wasn't too bad—Henry napped and I pretended to—and the high cost of gas actually did mean fewer people headed up to their northern retreats.

One of the first things I noticed up in the Houghton Lake area was a woeful sign of progress. Last year on my last trip up north I stopped at a bar called Bumper's—a cool old place with plenty of hickory—and basked in Kenny Rogers' improbable domination of the New York Yankees during the post season. The mood was ebullient then; the locals and I shouted and toasted together. Tears ran down my cheeks as I watched my favorite team trounce my least favorite.

This year, Bumper's is gone and a Walgreen's is in its place. It's happening everywhere, I guess, the little colorful nooks and crannies that make our respective communities so dear to us are being replaced by anonymous corporations.

We missed the good weather, too, and had to take a few steps outside of our normal routine.

Friday night, the television blew out as we tried to get the first-generation Nintendo game system to

work. This was inevitable; I'm surprised that old picture lasted as long as it did. The television itself was not too far removed from first generation technology; I think it was new when Millie bought the cottage in 1970. The wires needed to connect a relatively modern video game system to it and get it to work would probably give an electrical inspector a stroke; even then we had to tape the games in place to get it to work.

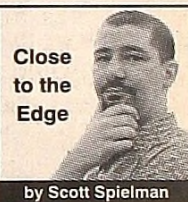
I pondered the now-silent television, thinking we'd probably need a crane to get it outside, and Henry's disappointed face.

"Well, it's no big deal, bud. We didn't come up here to play video games, anyway."

The power went out the next day. We at first thought it was the high winds, but later learned a couple of chuckleheads were cutting down a tree and they damaged a transformer. Silence spread from Prudenville to Wal-Mart.

That was no worry, either. Henry spent some time in the lake, even though he made me shiver just watching him—he has already learned that it's sometimes better to ask forgiveness than permission. In the afternoon, after he tired himself out, we spent time playing Connect Four or an improvised shell game with three red plastic cups and a round rock.

It was only after a few hours of that, without the ever-present sound of the radio or the crackle of a fuzzy television channel, that I realized what a fine thing that silence could be. It might be important to remember this summer, with everything more expensive and the cost of gas keeping more and more of us around our houses, that you don't need to go anywhere or even flip a switch to enjoy the things that are most important, and relaxing.



Friends don't come with the job

I've looked over a column I wrote in March, and yes, I may have put too fine a point on some comments about testimony offered in a racial discrimination Inkster lost earlier this year.

But the gist of my column, I believe – and which I'm allowed to opine about in this space – is still on target.

In the column of March 1, I wrote that Inkster Police Chief Gregory Gaskin was called by Mayor Hilliard Hampton and told not to consider promoting Lt. Tom Diaz because he filed a discrimination suit against the city. There was never a phone call – I was confused about another call that had been discussed at the trial.

This newspaper ordered an official trial transcript of Gaskin's testimony (you can view the rele-

vant portions online at www.journalnewspapers.com), and in my opinion, it is obvious that Hampton indeed did not want Diaz promoted, even if he didn't word it the way I did in my column. And, again in my opinion, the message to Gaskin about all of this was clear.

In cross-examination by Diaz' attorney, Gaskin confirmed Hampton made snide remarks about Diaz – though he did not elaborate on the specific comments. Diaz has worked for the police department for nearly 20 years. Gaskin also indicated in court that he was under the impression – based on Hampton's comments – that in his mind, the mayor



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See **Friends**, page 5

Budget

FROM PAGE 4

though, those things were never really in the mix; they were merely strong arm tactics espoused by the governor to get her true goal—a tax hike—approved by reluctant Republicans.

The budget fix may shore up

the predicted \$800 million deficit for the current year, but it does little to solve the projected \$1.8 billion deficit in the next fiscal year—a number that itself seems to be growing like plants under heavy spring rains. It shows more of the balancing act that got us into this position to begin with—taking money from certain funds and replacing it elsewhere, shifting payment times and borrowing

against the tobacco settlement. Most of the ‘feel good’ programs promoted during the State of the State speech don’t feel so good anymore, either.

It’s going to catch up with us sooner, rather than later.

This looks more and more like the setting of the stage for the big discussions of the next fiscal year—a tax increase, perhaps combined with a revisitation of

term limits and public employee pension plans.

Any discussion of a tax increase, though, must include long-reaching and dramatic governmental reforms. The beginnings of those were seen last week, as legislators brought up a plan to prevent public employees from receiving a pension while earning a salary from another municipality. The committee that

has discussed moving to a part-time Legislature has seen their issue pick up a little momentum, too.

These are both important problems to address and the State of Michigan, literally, cannot afford the kind of bi-partisan finger pointing and glory hogging that put the state on the precipice of such massive shutdowns to begin with.

Friends

FROM PAGE 4

didn’t want Diaz promoted.

Other testimony offered during the trial also indicated Gaskin insinuated to cohorts that the mayor didn’t want Diaz promoted, though Gaskin denied this.

Gaskin also said that he didn’t report to the mayor or council, which meant there was no pressure when it comes to making appointments.

But in an earlier deposition (you can view it online), he indicated that the mayor and council members wield power, and it’s wise for someone in his position to heed their wishes.

My contention is the same, even though Gaskin and I have argued about the situation. There’s a lot of compelling evidence that the chief was muscled regarding Diaz, and that needs to stop.

Whether the message was an inference, an impression, a remark, a comment, delivered by

”
*Many children and relatives
of locally elected officials have found
their names in the paper; it’s not unusual.*

a fax, a phone call, or by carrier pigeon, elected officials in any city – not just Inkster – have a huge impact on decision making in the administration.

So, why does this case keep coming up?

Because now that the city’s request for a new trial was denied in Federal Court, the city will likely begin negotiating punitive damages with Diaz’ attorney.

If the case settles for big money, or a jury awards the complainant a large sum – and punitive damages are often in the millions – it could bankrupt the city.

That means taxpayers – who had nothing whatsoever to do with what happened in this case – could, in a roundabout way, have to foot the bill. All of this would play out before an election.

Also, the mayor and council

members could be sued individually, which is something I’m sure they’ve considered as they look back on the case, and the events that led to the lawsuit to begin with.

There’s one other thing that needs to be made clear. Hampton, during a recent meeting, said that I have “gone after his family,” or something to that effect, and that is not the case.

What he is referring to is my inquiry into a court appearance related to a traffic situation that involved one of his sons. The reason we asked about it – and this was more than three years ago – was that there was some discussion at the court that the mayor was allegedly accusing the officer who initially had stopped his son of misconduct.

I never really followed the story through, but did have one

argument with the mayor about it. I explained to Hampton that we had to ask these questions, that he was a public official, and that if a person is in court, they, however temporarily, are public people, too.

Many children and relatives of locally elected officials have found their names in the paper; it’s not unusual.

We never followed up on the story in part because I felt I had other things more important to follow up on. Hampton, however, clearly believes he was above the question.

Hampton has three children, one of whom is a school board trustee, who has been quoted in this newspaper about school

events. I have never had a conversation with him that has involved his father, and I get along quite well with him.

Nothing about Hampton’s family, other than his father’s obituary, has appeared in the pages of this newspaper under my watch.

I inquired about the traffic stop, and about other business-related issues that involve Hampton, at the urging of other elected officials in the city and residents.

I’m a journalist. It’s my job. I long ago accepted that it isn’t going to earn me a place in the hearts of the people I cover.

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THE SCENE



Reviewed By
Jeff Novak
Staff Writer

Aarghhhh!!! Frustrating pirates trilogy is lost 'At World's End'

Aaaarghhh you ready for a let down?

The long-awaited, highly-anticipated *Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End* finally drifted into theaters last week for the holiday weekend and wrapped up what could be the greatest pirate trilogy based off of a theme park ride ever made.

Don't get too excited. It happens to be the only pirate trilogy of such degree ever made. And even with that in mind *At World's End* still falls short.

In the long run, and I mean looong run (over two and a half hours), it was a mess; a convoluted, aggravating and frustrating film that leaves the franchise with barely a leg—sea or peg—to stand on. Its waves of mediocrity did nothing more than wash away all that was great and fun about its predecessors *The Curse of the Black Pearl* and *Dead Man's Chest*.

Unfortunately, the ending will leave viewers wondering if there is yet another *Pirates* in the making.

My only hope is no. *Pirates 3* already proved that there actually can be too much of a good thing—be it CGI technology or the flocks of Captain Jack Sparrows that infiltrate a single scene. Don't get me wrong; one Sparrow is great; maybe even

two; but add a dozen or so and that gets a little annoying. And that's basically how the movie kicks off, leaving little to be desired the rest of the journey.

The movie opens with off-again, on-again lovebirds Will Turner (Orlando Bloom) and Elizabeth Swann (Keira Knightley) joining forces with the recently revived Barbossa (Geoffrey Rush) and all of the former Black Pearl crewmates as they search for Captain Jack Sparrow (Johnny Depp).

Sparrow was last seen being devoured by Davy Jones' monster cracken in the second installment. Here he is trapped in a mind-bending abysmal corner of the after-life in what is known as Davy Jones' locker—a scene that is no funnier than it is irritating.

From there, the plot jostles and turns down uncountable avenues.

Lord Beckett (Tom Hollander), the leader of the West India Trading Co., with Commodore James Norrington (Jack Davenport) back under his command and Davy Jones (Bill Nighy) under his control is on the same mission to eradicate all pirates for good.

Sparrow and company call a meeting of



the pirate lords—a group that includes the likes of Chow Yun-Fat as Captain Sao Feng and a convincing Keith Richards, who looked like he stepped directly from the Rolling Stones concert stage right on to the *Pirates* sound stage, as Captain Teague—also Jack Sparrow's father.

It's hard to tell who's on whose side, which boat is which and why Sparrow is still seeing more than one of himself.

For a good part of the 165-minute run

time there is very little to no action; the pace is slow; the jokes are rare as is the fun. The action doesn't pick up until the last 20 minutes, leaving a very long finale that doesn't hold a blade to a single sequence in either of the prequels.

Director Gore Verbinski actually does wrap things up nicely; tying up loose ends conjured up in the first two installments.

I guess, at its finish, all is lost *At World's End*.



THE SCENE

Pendulum rocks
Tragedy leads to new
form of independent music

Andrea King
Staff Writer

Listeners hungry for experimental acoustic rock will get their cravings met with Project Pendulum, according to lead guitarist and creator Geoff Brokos.

The indie-rock band started in 2006, shortly after 17-year-old Brokos, of Belleville, lost his uncle who committed suicide. The tragic incident left not only a mark in his memory, but the inspiration to create the band and the album: Answering Your Call.

"I want to tell people they have a purpose in life through this album," said Brokos. "You don't have to commit suicide, even if things seem that bad, everyone has a purpose."

With the help of Terrel Pierce, 17, of Westland on synthesizer; Daniel Hunter, 16, of Milan on bass; Matt Martell, 17, of Belleville on piano; Josh Greco, 19, of Canton on drums; Justin Thomas, 15, of Belleville also on drums and Brittany Adams, 16, of Belleville doing back-up vocals, the musicians became more than just high school friends.

The group compares their musical style to bands such as Dashboard Confessional and the Red Hot Chili Peppers with a mix of 80s rock. It is also heavily influenced in Christian beliefs, according to Pierce.

"All the guys in the band are dedicated Christians," said Brokos. "We want to give young adults, like ourselves, music that is positive and not the hypocritical Christian music or typical secular music (love songs.)"

That's why Brokos writes about stories and situations and, how people can change their ways to live a better-suited life, he said.

Their first record—Answering Your Call—talks about the story of a man who becomes unconscious in a car accident, has his life flash before his eyes and stares death right in the eyes, according to Brokos.

Songs such as 'The Pitts', 'Clown in the Corner' and 'The Devil Wears Your Girlfriend's Shoes' describes the story.

"It starts off with a man living an ordinary life who gets into a car crash after leaving his house," said Brokos. "When he's unconscious he dreams of what his life is like and what he's liv-



Project Pendulum includes: Geoff Brokos, Terrel Pierce, Daniel Hunter, Matt Martell, Josh Greco, Justin Thomas, Brittany Adams (not pictured) also featuring Seth Warga.

ing for and how he can change it. He realizes it's a second chance."

Brokos and his bandmates said every song has a different sound.

"It's different and unique compared to some of the stuff you hear," said Pierce. "People either accept it or they don't."

The band name—Project Pendulum—is also unique. It

stands for not only the group collaboration, but also time and how it swings back and forth and how we use it here on Earth.

"It was difficult to write this because it was personal, but I'm glad I did," Brokos said.

Most recently, the group played together at their CD release party, which is rare since they recorded the album separately.

"It was fun trying to come up with the parts," said Hunter. "We had to listen to what was being played and try to pick off from that."

"The overall experience was different," said Greco.

For upcoming shows, to purchase a CD or to learn more about the bandmembers, visit www.myspace/projectpendulum.

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THE SCENE

To the 'Rescue'

Friends of the Rouge plan annual clean up day at river

Meghan Chatham
Staff Writer

On Saturday, individuals from across southeastern Michigan will once again get back to nature during the annual Rouge Rescue river clean up.

A tradition since 1986, the Friends of the Rouge-sponsored event uses community assistance to better the environment around the Rouge River and its tributaries—from clearing trash to installing bird houses. Last year, more than 3,000 people from throughout the area participated in the event.

Karen Hanna, operations director for the Friends of the Rouge, said that the event is designed to fill two important roles within the community by both improving the environment and by helping residents gain a sense of ownership and responsibility toward the land. In fact, she said, that the actual clean up is only a small part of the project.

"It started out as a clean-up and it's evolved into a celebration," she said. "I think that people have lost a connection with nature. It's an opportunity to recognize this thing in your backyard and, hopefully, create a sense of stewardship."

She added that a large part of the effort is educational and geared at teaching participants about the environment.

"Definitely dress for the weather," she said. She added that long sleeves, long pants, and tough shoes or work boots are probably best attire, particularly for those who will be doing weeding or invasive plant removal.

According to the Friends of the Rouge web site, a few sites—including Goudy Park in Wayne, and several sites in Canton, have already signed up all of the volunteers they need. Most, however, are still actively searching for help. Advance registration is not required at most sites.

In Westland, "as many volunteers as possible" are needed from 8:30 a.m. to noon for debris cleanup, trail maintenance, and invasive plant species removal at Hix Park.

"The last time we were at that site (two years ago), we had 120 people," said Bob Patterson, site coordinator and a community development specialist with the Westland Department of Housing and Community Development. "It's amazing. It's getting better and better. We're cleaning up less and less each year."



Last year, Rouge Rescue volunteers in Wayne stayed busy clearing debris re-establishing walking paths, and sprucing up Dynamite Park.

Hix Park is located at the northwest corner of Hix and Warren roads. Individuals with questions or who wish to pre-register may contact Patterson at (734) 595-0288 ext.223.

In Plymouth, volunteers will be busy with creek clean up and storm drain stenciling from 9 a.m. to noon at Lion's Club Park, located on the corner of Burroughs and Harding streets. Families are welcome and as many volunteers as possible are needed to help.

There's also a need for more volunteers in Canton along the Lower Rouge River, located off of Michigan Avenue and Morton Taylor Road. The team will work from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. to complete invasive plant removal, guided trail tours, and birdhouse construction. Questions may be directed to site coordinator Erika Hidalgo at (734) 394-5150.

Volunteers are also still needed in Northville, where there will be plantings, site tours, nature walks,

and educational activities for children.

The activity site is located north of Eight Mile Road and west of Novi Road. Questions may be directed to site coordinator Selena Browne at (810) 931-6530.

All of the sites listed above are identified as "family friendly" and open to participants of all ages.

For information on Rouge Rescue or to look for clean-up locations in other communities, visit www.therouge.org.

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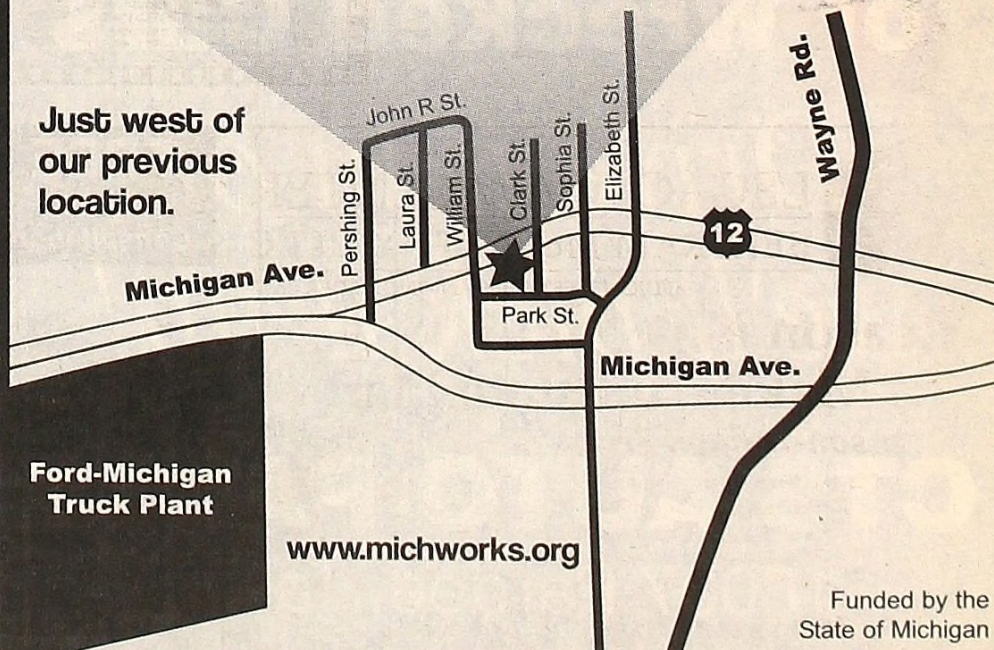
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THE SCENE

Waitress is tribute to short life of murdered film maker

Watching *Waitress* at the Landmark Main Art Theater in Royal Oak last weekend, I was gripped by sadness despite the fact that the story is basically uplifting.

That's because the writer and director of the film, actress and filmmaker Adrienne Shelley, was murdered in November 2006, shortly after this picture were completed. Perhaps the circumstances of Shelley's death may not have overshadowed the film had she not appeared in the movie, but I was glad she created a role for herself. It serves as a final reminder of her skills as a performer and director.

What is certain that the performances in the film elevate it above clichés that often accompany movies about unwanted pregnancies, or about people who work basic jobs. The characters are complex, the dialogue tight, and even though *Waitress* is a little too long, the story moves quickly.

The story follows Jenna (Keri Russell, of *Felicity* fame), a small-time waitress at a small-time diner known for delicious pie, which Jenna makes herself. She has a small dreams of opening her own pie shop that cycle more out of reach when — after deciding to leave her abusive husband, Earl (Jeremy Sisto) — she discovers she is pregnant.

Jenna, who never gives up her dreams despite the pregnancy, begins to see her doctor, with whom during the course of the movie, she falls in love. She shares her confidences about the doctor and her husband with two other waitresses, Becky (Cheryl Hines, of *RV*) and Dawn (Shelley), and with Old Joe (Andy Griffith), the owner of the diner.

There are no sordid revelations in the film, and no, there aren't any unsuspected twists. What *Waitress* does with its characters, and their ability to overcome obstacles created by playing a difficult hand in life, are essentially good ingredients peppered by tart, but not over-the-top, performances.

Hopefully, *Waitress* will be viewed by enough people in high places in Hollywood to recognize the potential in Russell, who as a result of this movie should get meatier roles.

Still, whenever the quirky Shelley appears on screen, it's impossible not to wonder whether *Waitress*, which was actually Shelley's sixth feature film, was the beginning of what could have been a great career in film — something that resembled the contributions of Nora Ephron.

Unfortunately, we'll never know that now.



Reviewed By
Molly Tippen
Staff Writer



We still have the heart and emotional pull in *Waitress* to reflect on; and that's something many filmmakers don't have.

It's a pall the movie doesn't deserve, but it's unavoidable if indeed the viewer followed the story of Shelley's death.

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KNOCKED UP (R)
11:00, 1:40, 4:20, 7:00, 9:40
PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END (PG-13)
11:00, 11:30, 1:30, 2:30, 3:00, 5:00, 6:05, 6:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:00
SHREK THE THIRD (PG)
11:50, 2:00, 4:10, 6:50, 9:00
FRI/SAT LS 11:10
SPIDER-MAN 3 (PG-13)
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CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF VAN BUREN PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING

The Charter Township of Van Buren Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, June 27, 2007 at 7:30 p.m., in the Board of Trustees Room, 46425 Tyler Road, Charter Township of Van Buren, Wayne County, Michigan

The Public Hearing relates to the following described property: Parcel tax ID number V125-83-095-99-0002-000. This property is located on the west side of Haggerty Road south of East Huron River Drive and north of Savage Road.

A map indicating the location of the subject site is included below.

The applicant is requesting special use approval for outside storage per Section 16.03(f) Vehicle storage yards, subject to the provision of Section 4.27 for open air business uses, per the Zoning Ordinance. Written comments will be accepted at the Department of Developmental Services until 5:00p.m., June 27, 2007, the date of the hearing.

In the spirit of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, individuals with a disability should feel free to contact the Department of Developmental Services at least seventy-two (72) hours in advance of the meeting, if requesting accommodations.

Posted: May 31, 2007
Publish: May 31, 2007

SPORTS

Northville wins conference

Jeff Novak
Staff Writer

The Northville Mustangs baseball team doesn't concern itself with streaks—winning ones or losing ones—they just play the game that they continue to get better at each outing.

After starting the season 2-4, the Mustangs went on a 25-game winning streak and won the Western Lakes Activities Association title with an 11-1 mercy over a visiting Walled Lake Central last Wednesday.

"We try not to think about streaks," said Northville Coach John Kostrzewa. "The biggest thing was watching the individual kids come together collectively as a team. It started in October, three-days-a-week in the weight room, with a vision. Our goal has been to play each inning of a game as a game itself—we're getting better every game."

Against Central there wasn't much to talk about in the five-inning mercy except for the big bats of Joe Mitchell and Damarii Saunderson. Each had three hits and three RBIs in the game. Dominic Benavides, Bryce

Jenney, Steve Anderson and Bret Spencer all had two hits apiece. Most of the hits were off of Central's leading and undefeated (7-0) pitcher, Corey Stimpson.

"We really hit the ball well against somebody that was undefeated," Kostrzewa said.

Jenney was also solid on the mound for the Mustangs. He struck out seven and only walked one batter.

Then again, pitching is the team's specialty—not to mention its strong point. At any time Kostrzewa can plug in any one of his four main hurlers and get, as his record indicates, winning results.

Bret Spencer is an undefeated 6-0 this season with two saves. Mike Deluca is 5-0 and Nick Balow, 4-0, with two saves. Jenney is 6-2 with three saves.

"There's only one person in baseball that can determine the game and that's the pitcher," Kostrzewa said. "These guys have worked hard and I have a great pitching coach in Scott Combs. With pitching there's a level of trust that you have to

See **Mustangs**, page 11

Belleville Lady Tigers beat Jags, Cougars

Jeff Novak
Staff Writer

The Belleville Lady Tigers—although limping with injuries sustained early in the year—proved that they can still hunt down wins.

The softball squad earned victories against host teams Allen Park and, most recently, Garden City to finish out the regular season at 21-7 overall. The team finished in second place in the Mega Red with a 9-3 record.

Belleville, behind the arm of sophomore pitcher Samantha Cole, shut out the Cougars, 6-0.

It looked like Garden City was going to take an early lead with a runner on third but Cole struck out batters the rest of the way. They again threatened in the sixth with bases loaded but the defense prevailed. A fielder's choice followed by a double play kept the Cougars scoreless.

Belleville scored two runs in the fourth and four in the seventh for the win.

Jasmine "Blue" Haralson had three hits on the day. Cole added two and Angel Matthews had a single that knocked in two runners—Megan Sierak and Cole—in the seventh.

Cole racked up 10 strikeouts in the win.

Cole had two of the team's three hits against the Allen Park Jaguars last Monday and struck out 10 more batters in the 3-1 victory.

Belleville still feels the pain of losing starting shortstop Hilary Ivan and first baser Kendall Aho, according to Belleville Coach Peggy Curtis.

"The injuries hurt us but we have had players step up and Cole can keep us in any game," Curtis said.

Even in the team's three league losses the Tigers only lost by one run in each game.

"We were right in them," Curtis said, "but it just didn't work out."

Last weekend Belleville felt the sting of not having enough depth at pitching at the Madonna Tournament. When Cole was in the team won. When she wasn't on the mound, the team lost.

Belleville went 3-2 on the day and eventually lost to Anchor Bay in the championship round.

The Lady Tigers defeated Marina City, 4-3.

Haralson, Cole—who hit a two-run homer in the second—Brandi Craig and Matthews all had two hits in the contest. They went on and beat Airport, 2-1. Belleville was down by one run going into the bottom of the seventh when Craig drilled a home run to tie. Lacey Marcotte scored the winning run on a fielding error. Cole had 11 strikeouts in the game.

Belleville also triumphed over West Bloomfield, 7-2, in the tournament. Again Belleville

See **Tigers**, page 11



Northville's Sarah Stern makes a move on Churchill's Bailey Brandon in the Western Lakes Championship bout at Northville last week. Churchill squeaked out a 1-0 victory to win its first conference crown since 1996.

Photo by Jeff Novak

Mustang kickers fall short in final

Jeff Novak
Staff Writer

It wasn't the outcome expected or desired by the Northville Lady Mustang soccer club last Wednesday.

The 1-0 loss to the Churchill Chargers in the Western Lakes conference championship bout at Northville High was an eye-opener for the team, now 11-3-3.

That was the second time this season that the Lady Chargers held the multi-talented 'Stangs—led by Penn State University bound Danielle Toney—scoreless. The first meeting between the two teams resulted in a 0-0 draw back on March 28.

Churchill has come a long way since Northville mercied the team last year. Now, the team that starts nine sophomores is one up on the 2006 state runner up.

The victory was in part due to the strong play of Churchill sophomore goalkeeper Stephanie Turner and solid midfield play that didn't allow Northville the quality opportunities the team is used to.

"It was a solid effort," said Churchill Coach Dave Hebestreit. "We moved the ball around the park and we were dangerous throughout the game. We moved the ball around a lot, especially in the middle part of the game and we looked good. We made them work defensively and made them work in the midfield."

The first half ended in a 0-0 tie. Northville put the pressure

on during the first 40 minutes and forced eight goal kicks. The Mustangs only had one quality shot, though, and Turner made the save.

Northville didn't attack the ball as much in the second half.

"The girls didn't attack as much as we thought they would in the second half," said Northville Coach Ron Meteyer. "In the first half the ball was in their end a lot. It was pretty even the first half as far as shots on goal but it was in their end a lot. Their goalie had to play it a lot and she comes out well and plays it with her feet. But the two mistakes that she made—which almost cost them two goals—she was playing it with her feet where she should have played it with her hands."

Churchill had a penalty kick chance near the top of the second half but the shot, by Alisha Lussieux, sailed over the bar.

Lindsay McMullen scored the lone goal at the 28:28 mark with a well-placed shot in the upper right hand corner where Northville goalkeeper Julie Blaszcak, or anyone else, couldn't reach it.

Northville never had a quality opportunity until the 10-minute mark when Toney had a semi-breakaway, splitting two defenders. She didn't get all of her shot off, allowing Turner to knock it away. The rebound landed to the right of the fallen Turner who managed to get back up and snag Karen Mayhall's shot out of the air.

Toney had another chance on a breakaway with less than a minute to play but was called

offside.

The win earned the Chargers, 13-3-2, their first conference championship since 1996, according to Hebestreit.

"We just played straight-up 4-4-2 against them and we knew that Toney was tough but they didn't score on us all year; we've played them twice now and shut them out twice," he said. "Both times we took (Toney) out of the game and didn't allow her any chances to speak of. I think we have the best goalkeeper in the area, who made two big saves for us, and our players were dedicated to winning this game."

Meteyer realizes there is still work to be done.

"We have to develop the outside a little better," he said. "That's what we've been working on all season. We tend to kick it in the middle a lot and when you have an all-American in the middle they want to get it to her. If you don't learn from the mistakes and make the corrections than it's a wasted effort."

This week started the district competition where the two teams, depending on how they did early this week in the early rounds (unavailable at press time), could meet for the third time this season.

That isn't a concern for the Mustangs.

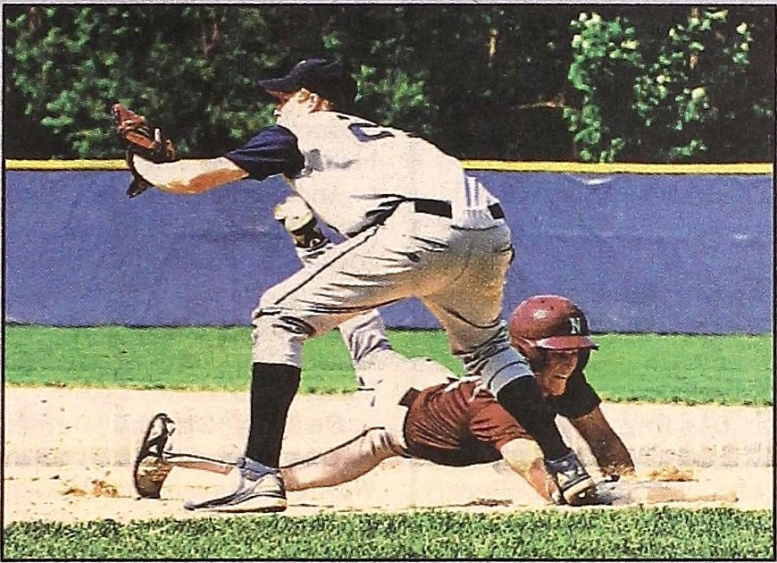
"The year we won the state championship (2004) we lost the league championship," Meteyer said. "We came back and beat the team that beat us in the league championship in the district championship."

SPORTS



J 'ousted'

The Wayne Memorial Zebras' struggles continued in last Wednesday's match-up with Walled Lake Northern. The Knights jousted Wayne to a 12-2 regular-season finish at Wayne. Northern's pitcher Andy Tinkey sat down 10 Zebra batters in the outing. Russ VanMaele (above) was a force at bat for the Knights, going 3-for-5 and J.D. Tinkey was 2-for-3. Wayne hosts districts this week. Photos by Ken Garner



Mustangs

FROM PAGE 10

reach with the coaches and the kids and I think we are pretty comfortable right now."

Another area of the game that Northville has improved on this year is base running. Gerard Powell and Mitchell have both broken the school record for stolen bases. Powell leads the team with 34 and Mitchell has 27.

Four other runners have 12 each. Mustangs have hit their stride and are playing some of their best ball right now with the districts this week at Novi-Detroit Catholic Central.

"There isn't a game I would have rather played right before districts," Kostrzewa said of the Central game. "We want to be playing our best game going into the districts and we are."

The Mustangs played the host on Tuesday but the results were unavailable at press time.

Tigers

FROM PAGE 10

by one run, 2-1, going into the sixth. Lindsey Williams came in to pinch hit and smacked a single that scored the tying run. That was enough to get the Tigers going. They scored five more in the frame.

Cole was a force, sitting down 16 batters.

Belleville lost to North Farmington and then to Anchor Bay, 15-0, in the championship game.

Next on the Tigers' plate is district competition.

The battle for the crown takes place Friday in Wayne. All games are scheduled for the single day event that starts at 10 a.m. The probability that Belleville will meet Garden City again in the district cham-

It would be good to battle with Garden City again.

**Belleville Coach
Peggy Curtis**

pionship is high. Belleville will play the winner of the Wayne-Westland contest—both teams have struggled all season. Garden City faces a struggling Romulus team.

"It would be good to battle with Garden City again," Curtis said.

"They're a good team and we're pretty equal but you never know what can happen the third time you play a team and in the district tournament."

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9:30am - 1:00pm

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SPORTS



Above, pictured from left, are Bill Juday, Steve Juday, Dave Longridge (head Northville basketball coach in 61-62), Dutch Van Ingen (assistant football coach in 1961 and retired Main Street Elementary principal), Ryan Hockman (current Mustang varsity head football coach), Dennis Colligan (retired Northville High principal and former athletic director and current Northville junior varsity head football coach).

Northville High retires Juday jersey

Northville varsity football coach Ryan Hockman presented Northville High School alumni Steve Juday with his retired jersey at the NHS Athletic Department's Alumni Dinner at Genitti's Restaurant on Friday, May 11.

Juday graduated from Northville in 1962. He was an All-State quarterback in 1961—his senior year—on a team that

went 9-0. He then started on the '61-'62 Mustang basketball squad that went 20-0. Juday went on to star at Michigan State at quarterback for legendary coach Duffy Daugherty. In 1965, he was an All-American and placed sixth in Heisman Trophy voting that year.

Northville High School also hosted the 2007 Steve Juday

Coaches Academy, attended by football coaches from a wide variety of teams. Mark Dantonio, Michigan State University head coach, spoke—as did the rest of his coaching staff. Additional speakers came from Bowling Green State University, Eastern Michigan University, Hillsdale College, Total Performance, and the Detroit Lions.

Giants oust Whalers

Renee White
Staff Writer

The Plymouth Whalers' Memorial Cup dreams ended Friday in Vancouver when the host Vancouver Giants routed them in the semi-finals, 8-1.

The two teams looked even at first but the turning point came in the first period, when the Whalers scored but it was controversially waved off because of intent to blow the whistle. After that, instead of picking themselves up and not letting a bad call get them down, the Whalers fell apart.

Wacey Rabbit, Michal Repik and Cody Franson each scored for the Giants before the Whalers replaced goaltender Michal Neuvirth with Jeremy Smith early in the second period.

But the change in goaltender proved ineffective. James Wright scored two goals and J.D. Watt, Spencer Machacek and Repik had one each against Smith.

Andrew Fournier scored the lone Whalers goal from rookie A.J. Jenks at 8:40 of the second period.

In round-robin play, the Whalers finished third out of four teams with a record of 1-2.

On May 21, the Ontario Hockey League (OHL) Champion Whalers played the Western Hockey League (WHL) Champions, the Medicine Hat Tigers and lost 4-1.

James Neal scored Plymouth's only goal in the third period. Brennan Bosch and Daine Todd each had single goals for Medicine Hat, while Tyler Ennis netted two.

The Whalers played the Lewiston MAINEiacs, the champions of the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League (QMJHL), on May 22. The Whalers won 2-1 in overtime against the only other American team in the Memorial Cup.

Simon Courcelles started the scoring for Lewiston in the first period. The game stayed at 1-0 until the last minute and a half of the third period, when Evan Brophey scored a spectacular shorthanded goal for Plymouth. Fournier was the overtime hero, scoring the winning goal just four minutes into the extra period.

"We had to win," Whalers Head Coach Mike Vellucci said after the game. "There was no question."

The win against the MAINEiacs meant that the Whalers had to play a tie-breaker game on Thursday to get a spot in the semi-final game. The way things turned out, the tie-breaker game was actually a rematch against the MAINEiacs.

The game wasn't nearly as close as the first match-up. The Whalers won 5-1.

Tom Sestito and Neal each scored twice and Brophey had a single goal for Plymouth.

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BUSINESS

A 'Penn' chant for service

Family marks 3 decades of service to community

Molly Tippen
Staff Writer

James Penn spent a lot of time thinking about every detail of the newest building on Inkster Road.

After all, it's a building he will leave to his sons, who will continue the work Penn Funeral Home has brought to Inkster in the 30 years since he returned home to set up shop.

"A new facility was something I thought about for a long time,"

he said. "I knew that it would be here for a while, so I wanted something better for our customers, my sons, and the community."

A local landmark and the largest provider of funerals in the city, Penn Funeral Home

resided in a 5,000 square foot facility on Inkster Road South of Michigan Avenue since 1971, when Penn acquired the former chicken shop and transformed it into a funeral home and mortuary.

Since then, Penn, his family, and his long-time associates have taken on the unenviable task of burying thousands of Inkster residents – some of whom were personal friends. Others were family members.

The new facility is more than double the size of the old one, and everything about it is modern, and unlike a typical funeral home, said Yvonne Penn, James Penn's wife of 19 years.

"We wanted this to be a welcoming environment," she said. "No one wanted this to be a morbid place – people are here because they've lost a loved one – but that doesn't mean the environment can't be uplifting."

Customers walk into the lobby

No one wanted this to be a morbid place – people are here because they've lost a loved one – but that doesn't mean the environment can't be uplifting.

of the funeral home, which along with the individual chapels are painted sage green. One of the parlors can be divided into two rooms, and the other has large, church-like pews. Yvonne Penn

picked out the colors, the huge crystal chandeliers that light every room, and the wall sconces.

"We looked all over for some of these items," she said. We're happy with how everything came out. We think this is the most modern – and the best place – to have a funeral in the community."

One of the best aspects of the new home, besides the modernization, is the fact that there is a basement, said James Penn Jr., a



The old Penn Funeral home was half the size of the new structure, and was located next door to the current facility on Inkster Road.

second-generation funeral director.

"The old building didn't have a basement, and it's been a god-send in terms of record-keeping," he said. "The amount of paper – death certificates, court information, you name it – that we have to keep is unbelievable."

"We'd like it to one day be paperless, but the government and everyone else has to do that first," he added.

The room where caskets are displayed was also expanded, Yvonne Penn said. "This room is much less crowded, and we can show what we offer in a better environment."

Robert Penn, the brother of funeral home founder James Penn, said the process of devising a new building played out over months about three years ago.

He's a residential and commercial developer, and though he declined to work in the family business, he understands that there are specific considerations when designing any building.

"My brother and I conducted recognizance, so to speak," he said. We went into other funeral homes and discussed what we liked, and what we didn't," he said. That helped us make some key decisions."

An architect, Roland Day III, was brought in to design the building. James Penn – knowing that the project was fairly substantial in size, asked his brother to employ local contractors as opposed to the stable of skilled laborers with whom Robert Penn normally works.

"My brother felt this facility

was for the community, and was concerned that local contractors and people who lived within the city were getting left out," Robert Penn said. "It's often that local contractors don't have the kinds of relationships they need to get the big jobs, so we gave them a chance. It ended up working out really well."

Mortuary Science was the last thing James Penn Sr. was think-

We know that we can take care of them better than anybody else. Why would we want them to go anywhere else? Somebody has to bury the dead.

ing about when he graduated from college in Kentucky in the late 1960s.

Then, on a fateful trip to Cincinnati with a friend whose father owned a funeral home, he discovered his calling, and enrolled in Mortuary Science classes.

He worked for two funeral homes in Detroit – including Swanson Funeral Home – before opening his own business, which included a funeral home in Inkster and in Detroit.

He discovered what looked like a downside shortly thereafter.

"We've lived in Inkster for so long that we know many of the

people that come here," he said. "If we don't know them personally, we know their grandmother, or their cousin, or some member of the family."

More than once, the Penns have prepared their family members for their final rest – James' and Robert's mother. Robert's ex-wife and son. Yvonne's brother.

James Penn Jr., who has been a funeral director for 15 years, said he found this difficult.

"When I had to take care of my grandmother, I thought I'd never get through it," he said. "I asked my father one day when we're in a car together, 'How do you do it?' But you do get through it."

Yvonne Penn has a matter-of-fact approach to handling funerals for family and friends.

"We know that we can take care of them better than anybody else," she said. "Why would we want them to go anywhere else? Somebody has to bury the dead."

James Penn knows he will likely spend far fewer years in the new building than he did in the old.

This weighs on his mind when he thinks about his sons, James Jr. and Chris, who will join the family business once he completes his mortuary studies at Wayne State University.

The family knows that the new building is inextricably linked to the past, and left the old sign in its place.

"It's a reminder of what we accomplished here," Penn said.

He said the goals of the funeral home remain the same.

"We wanted the building to be a place of comfort in a time of need."



Yvonne Penn, wife of James Penn, sit in the reception area of the new building. She decorated the new facility herself.

Just married

Hermatz-Kelley are wed

Erica L. Hermatz and Kevin M. Kelley were married Oct. 14, 2006 in Mexico.

The bride is the daughter of Dennis and Patricia Hermatz of Wayne and the groom's parents are Drs. Walter and Virginia Kelley of Auburn, ALA.

The couple exchanged vows during an evening ceremony with the Rev. Brad Meadon officiating.

The bride chose a strapless A-line white silk gown with a crinkle silk chiffon beaded overlay.

She carried a mixture of Gerber daisies, roses and tropical flowers.

Nicole Hermatz, of San Jose, CAL., a sister of the bride, was the maid of honor at the ceremony.

Bridesmaids were Kristen Kelly of Hendersonville, NC, a sister of the groom, and Stacey Brand of Los Angeles, CAL, a college friend of the bride.

They wore black strapless, knee-length dresses, matching that of the maid of honor.

Performing the duties of best man was Ron Chapman of Dallas, TX, a college friend of the groom.

Groomsmen included Ben Walrath of San Diego, CAL, Deval Hazanika of San Francisco, CAL and ushers, Dennis and Andrew Hermatz, brothers of the bride, from Wayne.

Acting as flower girl was Katherine W. Eisenreich of Washington D.C. who wore an off white gown and carried a basket of seashells originally carried by the bride when she was a flower girl.

The mother of the bride wore a blue and green print gown with a handkerchief skirt with beadwork on the bodice and a matching jacket.

The mother of the groom chose a solid mid-calf lined dress with a matching jacket.

Following the nuptials, the couple was feted by more than 40 friends and family at the Sheraton Hacienda Del Mar in Las Cabos, Mexico.

Guests included friends and family members from California, Texas, Canada, Germany, Australia, Michigan, Illinois, New York and Washington D.C.

Special guests included grandmother Mary Korndie of Westland and Godmother Linda Havel and her husband, Bruce Havel, also of Westland.

The couple traveled back to Plymouth for a reception at the Inn at St. John's for 150 guests on Oct. 28.

The newlyweds honeymooned in Bora Bora of French Polynesia and will make their home in Campbell, CAL.

The bride is an employment attorney at Little Mendelson in San Jose, CAL.

She earned her bachelors degree at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and her law degree at Santa Clara University School of Law in Santa Clara.

The groom is employed with a government agency in San Francisco. He earned his bachelors degree at Rice University and his PhD in exercise physiology at Auburn University.



Mr. and Mrs. Kevin M. Kelley

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1. Obituaries

POWELL, Robewrt, age 82, of Ocala, FL., formerly of Wayne, MI., died May 23, 2007.

Beloved husband of Mary Lou. Loving father of Darlene McKaig (Larry), Susan Mathis (Dave), Doug Powell, Deborah Swejkowski (Paul), Kevin Powell (Darlene) and Coreen Pelton.

Grandfather of 24, great grandfather of 15.

Memorial services will be held Wednesday, June 6, 2007 at St. Mary Catholic Church in Wayne. Family will receive visitors from 10 until 11 am, time of service at the church. The family requests that contributions be sent to Hospice of Marion Co., PO Box 4860, Ocala, FL 34978-4860.

Arrangements entrusted to Harry J. Will Funeral Home, Wayne.

Rayburn. He married Mary Jones on December 12, 1981. Ray was a Construction Engineer at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital and was a member of the Clinton Assembly of God.

Ray was a loving husband, father and grandfather and was the foundation of his blended family. He enjoyed traveling, fishing, deer hunting and spending time with his loving family and many friends.

In addition to his wife Mary, Ray is survived by his mother Della, his four sons; Ray (Tamara) Rayburn, Jr. of Onondaga Twp., MI Robert (Candace) Jann of Clinton, MI Bruce (Rhonda) Rayburn of Whittaker, MI and Russell (Victoria) Jann of Grass Lake, MI, three daughters; Lisa (Timothy) Taylor of Sandy Lake, PA, Patricia (John) Lynch of Ypsilanti and Donella (James)

Grissom of Whittaker, MI, two brothers; David (Barbara) Rayburn and Daniel Rayburn both of Belleville, one sister Geneva Jackson of Belleville, nineteen grandchildren and one great grandson. Ray was preceded in death by his Father Clyde.

Funeral services were held at the Clinton Assembly of God with Pastor Richard Coury officiating.

Interment was at Knollwood Cemetery, Canton, Twp.

Condolences may be offered at www.handlerfuneralhomes.com

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RAYBURN, Ray W., Sr., age 62 of Clinton, died Thursday, May 24, 2007 at St. Joseph Mercy, Ypsilanti. He was born on January 14, 1945 in Olivehill, KY, the son of Clyde and Della (Maddox)

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59. Auctions

Notice is hereby given that on 6/20/07 at 11:30am the following will be sold by competitive bidding at:

Stor-N-Lock
7840 N. Wayne Rd.
Westland, MI

Space #B-12-Cornell Harris: Household Items, misc. goods; Space # F-1-James Brudzynski: Misc. goods, vehicle; Space #G-20-Leonard Curry: Vehicle; Space #N-1G-Ronald Fox: Household items, misc. goods; Space #C-5-Gerri Kuck: Boat; Space #G-23-Elayna Handy: Household items, misc. goods; Space #L-2-Larry J. Williams: Household items, misc. goods; Space #L-27-Brenda Williams: Misc. goods; Space #H-28-Jason Collins: Household items, misc. goods; Space #L-4-Byron Gardner: Household items, recreational items, misc. goods; Space #F-26-Cheryl Miller: Household items, misc. goods; Space #O-3-Nick Kurlovich: Misc. goods.

Notice is hereby given that on 6/21/07 at 1:30pm the following will be sold by competitive bidding at:

The Storroom Self Storage
40600 Michigan Ave.
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Space #401-Dennis L. Lyons: Vehicle; Space #1219-Shirley Smith: Household items, misc. goods; Space #903B-Ben Doyle: Household items, misc. goods; Space #320A-Delray Washington: Household items, misc. goods.

Notice is hereby given that on 6/20/07 at 10:30am, the following will be sold by competitive bidding at:

Store-It Self Storage
29180 Van Born Rd.
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Space #02-Darlene Bentley: Household items, misc. goods; Space #11-

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